DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 163 002 SP 013 404

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TITLE The Process of Change in Curriculum.
PUB DATE Nov 78
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at National Association for Sport and Physical Education Symposium (St. Louis, Missouri, November 4-6, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Change; Change Agents; *Change Strategies; *Decision Making; *Educational Innovation; *Group Discussion; Group Dynamics; *Organizational Change; Problem Solving

ABSTRACT

Approaches to organizational change are examined, and the means for overcoming resistance to change are suggested. Seven models of change commonly used are identified as: (1) decree; (2) replacement of personnel; (3) structural reorganization; (4) group agreement; (5) data discussion; (6) group problem solving; and (7) T group. The sixth change model (group problem solving) examined in detail as the one model that minimized individual resistance to change and puts the power to direct and control the change in the hands of the people who are expected to change. While the desired outcome is determined by those in authority, the participants are actively involved in bringing about change with this method of decision making. The involvement of each person in diagnosis of the problem, generation of alternative solutions, and selection of a solution are essential ingredients of the model and simultaneously reduce personal resistance. (JD)

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NASPE Curriculum Academy
Working Symposium
St. Louis, Missouri, November 4-6, 1978

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THE PROCESS OF CHANGE IN CURRICULUM

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ED163002

The phenomena of "change" impacts on all our lives. Most of us resist change or, at the very least, try to slow down the rate of change. Two examples come to mind in the economic and social dimensions of our lives. First, many experts are working to control inflation, a word reflecting the continuously changing value of the dollar. An attempt to control the rate of change in the social climate of public schools is illustrated by lengthly documents on discipline policy. Educators want students to behave as we remember they behaved twenty-five years ago. Many of us talk about wanting change and working for change. Most of the time we don't want to change, we want to change the behavior of other people. My presentation this morning will examine a model of "planned change" in organizations, identify resistance to change and suggest some means for overcoming the resistance. Increased understanding of the change process should enhance the probability of success in future change projects.

A recent survey identified seven models of change as the most commonly used approaches to organizational change (Bennis, Benne

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and Chin, 1969, pp. 79-84). I shall briefly explain each of these seven models.

1. Decree

Title IX is an example of this model of change. Advocates of Title IX were quick to use the legislation as legitimazation of changes long desired. Other people are finding ways of circumventing the regulations. Over time, the decree of Title IX may produce significant results because disenfranchised people have legal recourse to force compliance. It is important to remember that power of enforcement is an essential ingredient of this model. Within organizations, this model can create situations where behaviors are changed only when the enforcers are monitoring it. Within schools, the tenure laws and master agreements on salaries minimize the power available to force a change by decree.

2. Replacement of Personnel

A change in personnel usually is used in conjunction with another model of change. A typical illustration comes from athletics, where the losing coach is replaced for the specific purpose of changing the record of the team. The new coach will change some aspects of the practices and strategies of the team, usually by decree. Administrative appointments are frequently seen as a way of facilitating change in an organization. Unless the new administrator initiates a process of planned change, the organization is

likely to continue the status quo because there has not been any process to change the behaviors of other people in the organization.

3. Structural Reorganization

Many institutional responses to Title IX illustrate this model. Separate departments of physical education for men and women were reorganized into single physical education departments. This reorganization did not require significant changes in programs. Some programs substituted new words for men and women and opened classes to both sexes without disturbing the existing differences. Other groups of faculty used the reorganization as a stimulus for development of new programs. When used alone, the model of structural reorganization may have minimal change impact.

4. Group Agreement

This model is based on a predetermined course of action presented to the concerned participants for their support. I suspect this model is used most frequently by teachers with a class and not infrequently by administrators with teachers. The only difference between this model and the first (decree) is the request for support from participants. When such requests come from positions of authority, participants are reluctant to publicly withhold support, even if they have no intention of supporting the change behaviorally. Additional insights on the use of this model come from examination of research on curriculum and instruction implementation (Fullan and

and Pomfret, 1977). The researcher designs the innovation and asks teachers if they will agree to implement the study. Once the researcher has obtained teacher agreement, it is assumed that the implementation proceeds according to plan. That is to say, all teachers changed their behaviors to the prescribed degree in the prescribed manner. However, when the degree of implementation was assessed, differences in teacher behavior accounted for approximately one-third of the variance in student achievement. It is even more surprising when you realize these studies examined implementation of content objectives and we would expect process objectives to produce more startling results. Restated, this analysis indicated that all teachers did not change their behaviors to include specified new content in their course after they had agreed to do so.

5. Data Discussion

Education is using this model in many state-wide testing programs. Physical education has used this model through the battery of fitness tests and the standardized knowledge tests. This feedback model appears to be a most desirable approach to initiating change. It is almost universally used in classrooms where teachers believe it will change students' behavior: We call this learning. When this model was proposed as an educational accountability system, teachers resisted. Accountability was a major factor in the Detroit Public School strike a few years ago. The teachers' refused to accept

responsibility for students' test scores and enumerated all the other factors that affect student learning. It is an interesting sidelight that these same teachers do not hesitate to evaluate students through use of this model.

6. Group Problem Solving

This model involves the affected group in the total change process and is based on the assumption that effective change emerges as a response to a problem. This model requires the longest time period and the most skillful leadership. It is also the model most likely to produce significant change. We will look at this model in more detail.

7. T Group

Another theory of change purports that changes flow from interpersonal differences within the group. This model speaks most directly to facilitating personal growth and may be a most appropriate approach when the problem is interpersonal in nature.

In looking back over the seven approaches, I would like to point out the varying distribution of power. The first model has absolute use of power by the authority position in the "decree" approach, frequently with the use of power to force compliance. "Replacement of personnel" and "structural reorganization" approaches maintain power in the authority position but are more indirect strategies for change than the "decree" approach. The "group agreement" model

is the first one to involve the participants in the change process but the desired outcome has been determined by the authority position. The first approach that involves participants in determining the outcome of the change process is the "data discussion." Here the authority position has used its power to determine the nature and extent of the data available. The "group problem solving" model is based on shared responsibility where the authority position takes the role of facilitator rather than decision maker. In the "T Group" model, there is no authority role and the goal is usually some dimension of personal growth. There is reason to believe that people change if they have power to determine the nature of the change.

Most writers in the field of planned change advocate a group decision making model since the evidence indicates people are less resistive to change if they are involved in the total process. There are variations in terminology, but the Havelock (1973) model is typical and his materials apply the model to education. Havelock's seven stages are familiar: build relationships, diagnose the problem, acquire resources, choose solution, gain acceptance, stabilize innovation and generate self renewal. As familiar as these look, it is always surprising to find this is a seldom used model. All too frequently a group is established to solve an apparent problem and the majority of the group time is spent arguing "pet" solutions, skipping the first three steps. Let's examine each stage of the

process.

1. Build relationships

Effect ve group functioning is often viewed as a magic combination of people rather than as a result of effective interpersonal skills. Group participants can be effective if they have an opportunity, (1) to learn interpersonal skills such as active listening and giving descriptive feedback, and (2) to understand the variety of roles that are important to a group such as gate keeper and summarizer. Time spent building these skills early in the life of a group contribute significantly to positive relationships within the group. Each person develops a personal responsibility for the functioning of the group and practices techniques that facilitate fulfillment of that responsibility.

2. Diagnose the problem

An obvious but neglected task is exploration of the problem. First definitions of the problem may turn out to be symptoms or at best a vague approximation of the problem. If you remember back when you wrote a research statement of the problem, you may remember a considerable number of revisions were needed. We should be no less rigorous in our definition of important problems we wish to resolve.

3. Acquiring resources

After the problem is defined and relevant information is gathered, it is important to generate a significant number of

alternative solutions for consideration. The most obvious resolution of the problem may not be the best resolution. It is at this point that the generation of data can be most helpful. Differences in opinion should be tested in miniprojects, avoiding power moves to arrive at a premature response to the problem.

4. Choose solution

All group members should agree in the solution of the problem. To accomplish this objective, it is sometimes necessary to devise solutions that have differential effects on people. It is important for each person to have a legitimate role that is individually selected. For example, let's say that the preliminary data of the miniprojects indicated your procedures were more effective than mine. But I still believe that those results are short lived and in the long run slower progress is more stable. Instead of becoming alienated from the project, I can still be involved if I choose to collect data checking out the stability of the desired outcomes. If my premise is correct and supported by data collected over a longer time, the group probably will decide to reassess its decision. If my premise is incorrect, I've had time to understand the innovation since I've been analyzing the process as a basis for data collection. The primary value of this process is the continued involvement of all group members.

5. Gain acceptance

Most innovations require acceptance and/or approval by administrators and boards of education. Students, parents and the community as a whole are also publics that should be involved in this stage of the process. Ideally, representatives from these publics will have been part of all stages of the group problem solving process so that this time is devoted to widespread dissemination.

6. Stabilize the innovation, and generate self renewal

When the innovation is stabilized, it will be an expected dimension of the program. Optimally, the innovation will have built in processes of reevaluation and modification.

Resistance to change should be anticipated in planned change projects. It is a skillful leader that is sensitive to behaviors that reveal the resistance. Group characteristics that are symptomatic of resistance have been identified by Argyris (1973) and include the following behaviors:

- Discussions are not additive and the flow of talk is not monitored to go in some direction.
- People are not helpful to one another.
- The group is not able to reach conclusions yet individuals want conclusions.
- Action is talked about but seldom taken.
- Unimportant issues are discussed at length while important topics die for lack of response.

- There is a group norm against bringing up threatening issues.
- Leadership is felt to be too controlling or absent.
- Members do not believe groups can work.

There are forces in our personality and in the social system that contribute to our resistance to change. (Bennis Benne & Chin 1969). Three forces in our social system seem most relevant to these considerations.

1. Conformity to norms

Shared norms within a social system makes it possible for us to work together and have reasonably accurate expectations of one another. This is a desirable characteristic of a social system and it creates a stable social climate. This stability is also a resistance to change.

2. Systematic and cultural coherence

Our social system is complex and highly interdependent. A change in any part of the system affects many other parts of the system. These interdependent relationships give stability to the social system thus creating resistance to change.

3. Vested interests

Our hierarchical social system causes each of us to view the prerogatives of our position in a highly protective manner. We do not willingly give up "our turf." Again, this force contributes to our

resistance to change.

A number of common personal characteristics cause us to resist change. Habit is hard to change. Our first successful method of coping with a situation sets a persistent pattern (primacy). We all have selective perception and retention; that is, we do not hear clearly or remember well if we disagree with what is being said. We more frequently agree with our parents than disagree (conservatism).

It is important to remember we share these personal characteristics and we are all subject to these social forces. We all resist change. We are individuals only in the varying strength of that resistance in different situations.

At this point it seems appropriate to look at special characteristics of teachers and teaching. The sociological study by Lortie (1975), School Teacher, provides a significant extension of the general considerations of resistance and the process of change.

Historically, a structural feature of education is continuity. Elements of this stability are the continuing authority of the school board, status within society, working alone, teaching techniques and easy access to the profession. Technology has had a major impact on change in almost every other profession and occupation but not on education. Selective entrance and exit assessment in training programs govern the quality and quantity of people entering

many other professions and occupations, but not education. No other occupation places the same demands on the person the first and last days of a lifelong career.

Since access to the profession is easy, self selection is the deciding factor. Generally, education appeals to young people who are favorably disposed toward the existing system of schools and to those who have a limited interest in the occupational affairs of teaching but like the limited demands on time. Thus, recruitment leads to continuity.

The individualistic nature of the socialization process does not offset the conservative nature of the school and impact of the recruitment process. Differentiated rewards for generation and development of technical resources are totally lacking within the occupation of teaching. These are but a few of the factors that come together forming an occupational sub-culture characterized by individualism and conservatism reinforcing each other.

Thus, it is not surprising that change in schools is characterized more by expectation than by practice. Schools, today, cope with these expectations through rhetoric and showcasing special projects. Lortie's (1975) study points up the reasons teachers are particularly resistant to change and the need to anticipate a high level of resistance.

Although changes in education have been few and of limited impact on the system, it should be possible to bring about planned change. The first consideration must take into account the resistance of teachers. Individual resistance to change will be minimized if a person feels:

1. ownership of the project.
2. involved in diagnosis of the problem and that the problem is important.
3. group decisions will be arrived at by consensus.
4. others are helpful in relieving unnecessary fears.
5. misunderstandings and misinterpretations are to be expected and can be clarified.
6. acceptance, support, trust and confidence in relationships within the group.
7. personal autonomy and security are not threatened.
8. personal values and ideals are not threatened.
9. this new experience is interesting.
10. support of top officials.
11. present burdens will be reduced.
12. the project is open to revision and reconsideration if experience indicates changes are desirable.

In looking back at the group problem solving model, many of these recommendations are accommodated in the process. The involvement of each person in diagnosis of the problem, generation of alternative solutions, and selection of a solution are essential ingredients of the model and simultaneously reduce personal resistance.

In addition to the attributes of the group problem solving model, which serve to decrease resistance, the model seems particularly appropriate for educators today. One direction of change in schools appears to be toward greater student involvement in decision making. This direction is congruent with what many teachers believe should happen. One survey of 1700 teachers indicated 85% believed students should be involved in decision making. Only 50% of those same teachers claimed they did so and only 35% of their students believed they were so involved (Fullum and Pomfret, 1977). These data would lead one to believe teachers lack the skills needed to involve students more fully in decision making. In another study of 100 educators, teachers could analyze but not produce behaviors that relinquish unilateral control (Argyris, 1976). There is evidence to suggest that once a person gets to this awareness level, one has to confront fear and decide to give in to that fear or try something new (Argyris, 1976). In other words, once a teacher knows some ways of involving students they may use the process and then add "subject

to my approval". If asked, the teacher will be aware that they did not give up the control. At this moment it is essential to talk about the fears associated with giving up control. It is scary! Interpersonal support and sharing feelings can provide the base to allow the teacher to decide it is better to give up control, even though scared, than to give in to the fear of relinquishing control.

Argyris (1976) discusses these studies in relation to his proposition that we cannot teach people to give up unilateral control by exerting unilateral control over them. As administrators, university teachers and consultants, we can no longer continue to try to exert control over teachers. Teachers will learn to give up control to students only when and if others give up control over them.

In summary, we have looked at several models of planned change and found the group problem solving model is the one model that minimizes individual resistance to change and puts the power to direct and control the change in the hands of the people who are expected to change. Resistance to change has been acknowledged as a human condition as a result of both personal and social forces and is exaggerated in the occupational sub-culture of teachers. We have recognized that change is a difficult process and people need interpersonal support to change in positive directions. Many advocates of change are interested only in changing others, not themselves. As teachers and administrators working with teachers, we must use

strategies of shared responsibility if we desire outcomes of self growth and satisfaction that results from increased effectiveness.

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